

Raleigh Digital Connectors

Connecting with Young People

Young people are key assets for Raleigh to continue as a national leader in high-tech innovation. The Digital Connectors program offers youth a chance to expand 21st century technology skills, develop professional life skills, explore workplace pathways, and serve their communities. Each Digital Connector commits to 56 hours of community service. Youth in the Digital Connectors program are dedicated to improving their communities and themselves through technology and community service.

Raleigh’s Digital Connectors program began through a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant in partnership with One Economy. In the future, the City of Raleigh intends to sustain the program through strategic partnerships and to offer expanded levels of digital readiness, including advanced and entrepreneurial programs. Raleigh aims to develop a sustainable program that other communities can use as a model for preparing their youth to succeed in the 21st century workplace.

Community Service



Digital Connectors serve their community by:

- Training community members on basic computer skills and the Internet
- Refurbishing computers for economically disadvantaged families
- Promoting digital literacy at community events with partner agencies
- Performing humanitarian community service projects



Lasting Benefits

Digital Connectors receive long-lasting benefits by:

- Increasing their computer and Internet knowledge
- Learning the value of access and digital inclusion in their community
- Becoming certified in Ever-Fi financial literacy
- Learning entrepreneurship and life skills
- Gaining skills to succeed in high school, college, and the 21st century workforce
- Becoming young leaders in the community

During the academic school year, Digital Connectors attend classes two evenings a week for a total of five hours. Youth learn technical, leadership, social, and life skills through a combination of instructor-led training, team exercises, field trips, guest speakers, mentors, and community service. Graduates of the program receive \$500, a laptop computer, and other incentives for their participation.

In an innovative technology lab at the Saint Monica Teen Center, Digital Connectors learn skills in twelve core competencies:

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| • Leadership & Diversity | • Software and Programming |
| • Personal Development | • Media Production and Civic Journalism |
| • Workforce Development | • Environment and Sustainability |
| • Financial Literacy | • Service and Global Engagement |
| • Community Mapping | • Teaching and Facilitation |
| • Digital Literacy | |
| • Hardware and Networks | |



Visit YouTube and enter “**Raleigh Digital Connectors**” to watch public service announcement projects Digital Connectors completed as part of their media production and civic journalism training.



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Raleigh Connected

Connect | Discover | Learn | Grow

A Wider Goal

Raleigh Connected is dedicated to the belief we should enrich the community in which we live, work and serve by developing community programs that promote digital inclusion. We are committed to the idea that individuals should have access to technology to learn critical workforce skills and enhance their lives.

The technology infrastructure of Raleigh Connected helps make city government more efficient. However, our goal is much greater. We seek to promote economic growth across the city through workforce training and widespread Internet access. That is why we have teamed with One Economy Corporation, a global technology nonprofit organization.

One Economy is bringing \$1.4 million in federal stimulus funds and corporate support to make technology available and affordable for people seeking jobs, education and useful information.

A Technology Culture

When we connect underserved communities with technology, we give residents the power to enter the economic mainstream. With the help of One Economy, we will provide wireless access to nearly 2,000 households in low-income communities of our city. Afterwards, the service will be free for a period of time.

Youth in the Digital Connectors program live in these communities. They will serve as ambassadors, teaching their families, friends and neighbors to take advantage of the digital economy. Digital Connectors practice skills to prepare them for opportunities in tomorrow’s technology-driven economy. This is a multigenerational approach, with young people showing their elders how technology leads to knowledge.

The City of Raleigh understands that mere access to technology is not sufficient. In addition to digital literacy training, the City of Raleigh sponsors the Raleigh Beehive (raleigh.thebeehive.org). The Raleigh Beehive is a self-help website providing reliable information and easy-to-use tools in five key areas that matter most to people: money, health, jobs, school, and housing.

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Inclusion For All

Forbes magazine had good reason to put Raleigh in the number one spot on its list of America’s Most Wired Cities. As the magazine notes, Raleigh is a tech-forward city, serving as a model for the country in broadband penetration and access.

The city’s comprehensive technology initiative, Raleigh Connected, offers free Wi-Fi throughout downtown, creates a fiber network to serve government and schools and extends wireless access in the community. We believe to build a strong local economy we must invite everyone into the digital age. “At stake is more than just bragging rights. As the U.S. formulates a national broadband plan designed to connect the entire country to fast, affordable Internet, Raleigh and other top-ranking Wired Cities could serve as models for change,” according to Forbes.

More Than Hardware

Raleigh Connected is about so much more than hardware. Through access, education, awareness and information, we are building a culture that values technology and embraces it to enhance lives. Raleigh is building a 21st century city using technology as a catalyst for sustainable economic development.

The Network

The City of Raleigh network includes a downtown fiber ring for major city buildings. In collaboration with a traffic signal upgrade project, 125 miles of additional fiber is being added around Raleigh's 142.8 square miles. The network, due for completion in 2013, will allow high-speed network access for vital municipal locations throughout the city and interconnections to partner organizations.

VoIP Upgrade

Moving to voice over IP telephony in 2008 saved the City \$150,000 annually, eased management, and propelled future technological advancements.

Data Center Consolidation

The data center consolidation is expected to save the City \$1.69 million and provide a single, scalable, flexible, and green data center.

Raleigh Convention Center

Raleigh Convention Center's cutting edge technology infrastructure supports major conventions and shows, including the 2010 International World Wide Web Conference, the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Internet Summit, and the Internet2 annual meeting. The key technology includes Wi-Fi inside and outside the center, and voice over IP, all supported by a gigabit Ethernet network.

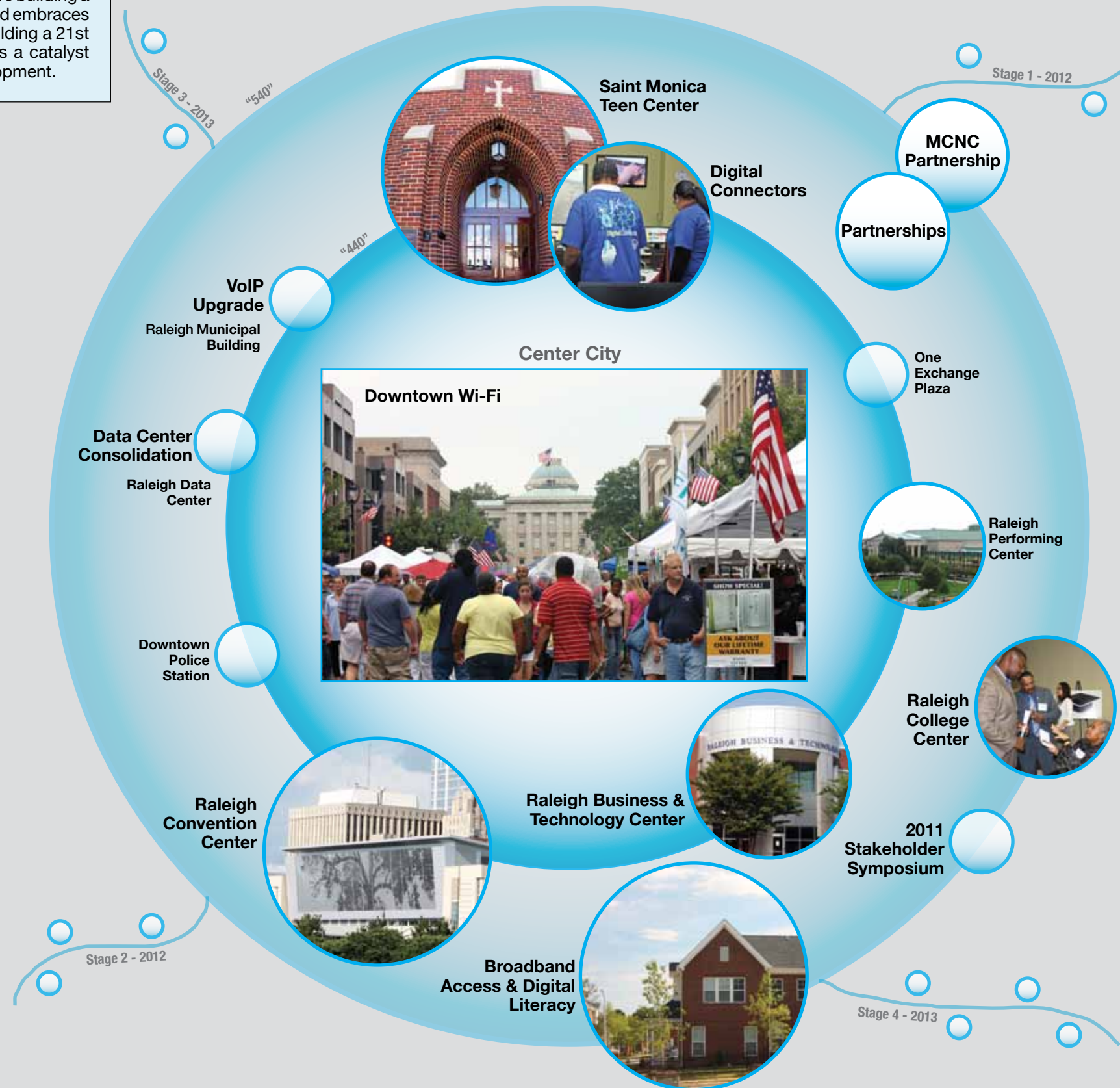
Downtown Wi-Fi

Raleigh offers free outdoor Wi-Fi in public outdoor spaces in the center city. The Wi-Fi network serves thousands of downtown business professionals, visitors, and patrons each month. The City of Raleigh and the Downtown Raleigh Alliance brand and market the service—*You R Connected*.

Raleigh Business & Technology Center

The Raleigh Business & Technology Center serves as a business incubator assisting new and existing small businesses with management, marketing and financial planning. The center includes training facilities that support workforce development and students from the Raleigh College Center. The RBTC recently received an IBM grant and assistance to develop a strategic plan.

Raleigh Connected



Saint Monica Teen Center

In collaboration with the Parks and Recreation, Department, the Information Technology Department provides an innovative learning lab in the Saint Monica Teen Center. Teens participate in virtual field trips and engage with mentors, instructors and experts from around the world thanks to strategic partnerships with AT&T, AT&T Pioneers, Cisco Systems, MCNC, Microsoft and SAS Institute. The advanced learning lab is home to Raleigh's Digital Connectors training program.

Digital Connectors

The City of Raleigh, in partnership with One Economy Corporation, is providing the Digital Connectors training program for Raleigh youth. Digital Connectors is a nationally renowned program created by One Economy that provides technology training and mentoring for young people, age 14 through 21.

MCNC Partnership

The City is partnering with MCNC to access its in-state disaster recovery site. Connectivity to the MCNC network also provides access to high capacity bandwidth for video conferencing.

Additional Partnerships

The City of Raleigh is partnering with innovative technology and education initiatives such as:

- Gig.U
- U.S. UCAN
- NCEdCloud

Raleigh College Center

The Raleigh College Center provides workforce and leadership development and helps make post secondary education more accessible in the community. Six colleges and universities collaborated through a \$100,000 planning grant that led to a \$1.5 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation for establishing the Raleigh College Center. The centers will be conveniently located in neighborhoods where youth and family members can receive information, gather resources, and participate in workshops.

2011 Stakeholder Symposium

During the 2011 Stakeholder Symposium individuals from like-minded organizations began discussions about building a broadband and technology ecosystem to support innovation and economic sustainability in Raleigh communities.

Broadband Access & Digital Literacy

Through a BTOP grant in partnership with One Economy Corporation, the City is providing broadband access to nearly 2,000 homes throughout Raleigh.